# SPORT

## Inter go top of Serie A after Napoli slip-up

MILAN: Italian champions Napoli came unstuck at Bologna on Sunday, losing 2-0 to cede the Serie A summit to Inter Milan who downed Lazio by the same scoreline.

AS Roma, who beat Udinese 2-0 earlier, briefly held the summit, only for Inter to dislodge them on goal difference.

With the game just three minutes old, Lautaro Martinez put Inter in control with Ange-Yoan Bonny doubling the lead on the hour with a shot from close range.

Piotr Zielinski thought he had scored Inter's third but his effort was overturned by VAR.

Earlier, goals in the capital either side of the break by Lorenzo Pellegrini and Zeki Celik sent Gian Piero Gasperini's Roma temporarily to the top of the table on 24 points after 11 outings.

The breakthrough came for Roma when Hassane Kamara conceded a penalty after handling in the Udinese box.

Pellegrini stepped up in the 42nd minute to send Maduka Okoye the wrong way.

The Romans wrapped up the vital three points one minute after the hour as Celik forced home from Gianluca Mancini's cutback.

Udinese had chances to get themselves back into the match inside the final 20 minutes but Roma goalkeeper Mile Svilar stood strong to deny first Nicolo Zaniolo, then Vakoun Issouf Bayo.

Earlier, Napoli failed to take advantage of AC Milan's collapse against Parma on Saturday when they were held 2-2 after leading by two goals as they went down at the Stadio Renato Dall'Ara.

After a goalless first half, Napoli were caught off-guard five minutes after the break by a precise shot by Thijs Dallinga following a magnificent cross from the left by Nicolo Cambiaghi.

In the 66th minute, Bologna wrapped up the win.

This time the danger came from the right: a cross and a header by Jhon Lucumi into Napoli's top right corner.

Bologna moved to fifth, a point off fourth-placed Napoli.

In other action, Sassuolo downed Atalanta 3-0 and struggling Genoa were held 2-2 by last-placed Fiorentina.—AFP

BOLOGNA: Jhon Lucumi (second L) of Bologna heads to score against Napoli during their Serie A match at Stadio Renato Dall'Ara.—Reuters

## Neves late show sends PSG top of Ligue 1

LYON: Joao Neves' late winner returned Paris St-Germain to the top of Ligue 1 as they beat Olympique Lyonnais 3-2 on Sunday, while Emanuel Emegha netted a brace as Strasbourg defeated Lille.

PSG had gone into the weekend's action in top spot, but were knocked off it by arch-rivals Olympique de Marseille who beat Brest 3-0 on Saturday to edge ahead by a point.

The chance to restore their lead seemed to have slipped by Luis Enrique's side until Neves' 95th-minute header at the Groupama Stadium.

Reigning champions PSG now sit on 27 points, two clear of second-placed Marseille.

"Resilience is a word I like," said PSG coach Luis Enrique.

He added: "We showed the right mentality to win this match. It's important because in adversity, we win, and we are first in Ligue 1."

This win acted as a pick-me-up for PSG after their midweek Champions League defeat to Bayern Munich.

Late defeat condemned Lyon to seventh spot, seven points off the leaders.

The visitors went ahead on 26 minutes as Warren Zaire-Emery raced onto Vitinha's ball over the top.

Lacking options in the middle for a square pass, the 19-year-old instead decided to unleash a rasping drive which flew past Dominik Greif at his near post.

Lyon responded four minutes later as Afonso Moreira sprung the PSG offside trap with a run from deep, before slotting past Lucas Chevalier.

But the hosts' joy turned to fury inside three minutes as PSG retook the lead via a crisp Khvicha Kvaratskhelia finish.

Lyon players swiftly gathered around the referee to protest Vitinha's challenge on Tanner Tessman to win the ball back, before teeing up the Georgian.

The Portuguese seemed to go straight through the back of Tessman, but after a VAR review the strike was validated.

A decision which resulted in assistant coach Jorge Maciel earning himself a yellow card for his reaction.

"We need to talk about video refereeing. French football has an incredible league, but to have a real product, you need three teams on the pitch doing their job," Maciel fumed after the match.

Nicolas Tagliafico struck the PSG woodwork four minutes before the interval as Lyon went into the break bemoaning their luck.

But Ainsley Maitland-Niles soothed those frustrations five minutes into the second half with a superb lofted finish from Tyler Morton's ball over the top.

PSG suddenly found themselves on red alert on 80 minutes as Chevalier and his defence were required to pull off some last-ditch heroics to deny Lyon.

Tagliafico was dismissed in injury time after picking up a second yellow for tussling with Lee Kang-in off the ball.

The resulting free-kick went behind for a corner, and from that set-piece the diminutive Neves popped up to stun the hosts.

Earlier on Sunday, after missing Strasbourg's last five league outings with a thigh issue, Emegha returned with a bang as he fired the hosts to 2-0 victory over Lille.

His goals either side of half-time lifted Liam Rosenior's side to fourth place on 22 points.

Lille dropped to fifth after falling to their fourth defeat of the campaign, and now trail Strasbourg by two points.

"This match was similar to some of our recent matches," Lille coach Bruno Genesio said.

"You can't say that we played very badly or that the opposition were superior to us. We made mistakes that cost us dearly and we lacked variety and initiative."

Elsewhere, Lorient and Toulouse played out a 1-1 draw in Brittany with both sides scoring from the penalty spot. Metz beat Nice 2-1 and bottom-side Auxerre lost 2-0 at Angers.—AFP

## Two matches decided

By Our Sports Reporter

LAHORE: Diamond Paints/Din and Rijas/Sheikhoo won their respective matches comfortably on the first day of the 13th Maj Gen Saeed Uz Zaman Janjua Polo Cup here at the Lahore Garrison Polo Ground on Monday.

Five goals from Raja Jalal Arslan inspired Diamond Paints/Din to a 9-5½ victory over Chakor Ventures. Saim Abbas and Mir Huzaifa Ahmed scored two each for the winners.

For Chakor Ventures, Ahmed Bilal Riaz netted two goals while Col Omer Minhas, Umair Qaimkhani and Ali Quli Khan contributed one each.

In the second match, Raja Samiullah's superb nine-goal show guided Rijas/Sheikhoo to an 11-6½ win against Team Balochistan.

Taimur Noon and Faisal Shahzad chipped in with one goal apiece.

For Team Balochistan, who enjoyed a 1½-goal handicap advantage, Raja Mekayal Sami scored three while Maj Haider Gulrez added a brace.

## Lewandowski hat-trick helps Barca punish Real slip

BARCELONA: Robert Lewandowski hit a hat-trick to help Barcelona beat Celta Vigo 4-2 on Sunday in La Liga and cut Real Madrid's lead down to three points.

The veteran Polish striker's treble helped Hansi Flick's side capitalise on Los Blancos' 0-0 draw earlier on at Rayo Vallecano.

Teenager Lamine Yamal also scored for Barca in another gripping game produced by the champions' attacking approach, and Marcus Rashford produced two more assists.

Frenkie de Jong was sent off late on for Barca for two yellow cards but by then the champions had secured their victory to move second.

Lewandowski has had a stop-start beginning of the season because of injury and Flick said his hat-trick would boost his confidence.

"After the injury I can see a different Robert Lewandowski, he's positive, he came back very early," Flick told reporters. "For him, for his confidence, it's great to score three goals today."

The champions nosed ahead through a Lewandowski penalty on 10 minutes after a handball but Celta equalised a minute later.

VIGO: Barcelona's Robert Lewandowski scores against Celta Vigo during their La Liga match at Estadio de Balaidos.—Reuters

Rashford missed a one-on-one chance and Celta broke away to score, with Sergio Carreira scampering behind Barca's high defensive line.

Looking back to his best, Lewandowski grabbed his second from an inviting Rashford cross to put Barca back in front on 37 minutes.

Celta quickly hit back again, this time through Borja Iglesias, who smashed home from the edge of the box.

However, Barca went in with the lead when Rashford's deflected cross found teenage star Yamal, who beat Ionut Radu at his near post.

Lewandowski completed his hat-trick with a header from Rashford's corner after 73 minutes to wrap up the win.

Earlier, Real Madrid were left frustrated in their goalless draw at Rayo on Sunday, giving champions Barcelona a chance to close in on them.

Rayo battled strongly in the derby clash and although Real had the better chances, the hosts also had opportunities to win a scrappy game.

They managed to limit La Liga top scorer Kylian Mbappe's influence, while keeping Vinicius Junior and Jude Bellingham safely at arm's length as well.

Real were hoping to bounce back from their Champions League defeat by Liverpool at Anfield on Tuesday but Alonso's team dropped points for only the second time this season in the league.

"I want to keep growing, improving, with positive and constructive self-criticism — this is Real, we all know where we are and what we want," coach Xabi Alonso told reporters.

"We're in November, there's a long way to go, we need to be demanding of ourselves [but] also be measured."

Inigo Perez's Rayo threatened first, when Andrei Ratiu fired straight at Real goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois.

After that Real began to take control but the hosts, in mid-table, held firm.

Rayo goalkeeper Augusto Batalla made a fine instinctive save to push away a Vinicius effort and the hosts starved Madrid superstar Mbappe of the ball.

De Frutos and Alvaro Garcia came close for Rayo in the second half while Bellingham forced Batalla into another good save.—AFP

## Asif survives scare to reach knockouts at IBSF worlds

DOHA: Defending champion Mohammad Asif sealed his place in the knockout rounds of the IBSF World Snooker Championship, but only after a dramatic 4-3 victory over China's Pan Yiming on Monday.

Asif seemed headed for a comfortable win, taking the first three frames 68-18, 74-35 and 90-37.

However, Pan mounted a stunning comeback, claiming the next three frames to force a decider. The Chinese player won the fourth frame 76-8, edged a tight fifth 78-58 and levelled the match with a 91-26 win in the sixth frame, which featured a 67 break.

The 43-year-old regained his composure to take the final frame 55-28, securing his progression from the group stage.

In contrast, Under-17 champion Mohammad Hasnain Akhtar was eliminated after a heartbreaking 4-3 loss to Mohammed Shehab of the UAE.

Shehab dominated early, winning the first two frames 72-13 and 73-19. The 16-year-olf Hasnain responded by taking the next three frames: 67-29, 80-6 (with an 80 break) and 54-19.

Shehab, however, won the sixth frame 53-19 and clinched the match by taking a nail-biting final frame 68-62.

Meanwhile, other Pakistani players enjoyed a successful day. Asjad Iqbal beat Iran's Hamed Zarehdoost 4-3 (61-24, 60-17, 52-53, 10-69, 11-80, 79-0(67), 75-7), while national champion Shahid Aftab defeated Darryl Hill of the Isle of Man 4-1 (3-56, 66-14, 80-6, 81-4(68), 61-52).

Their chances of advancing to the knockout stage depend on the final group matches.—Agencies

STUTTGART: Deniz Undav (L) of VfB Stuttgart and Augsburg's Chrislain Matsima vie for the ball during their Bundesliga match.—AFP

## Undav brace sends Stuttgart fourth, Frankfurt win late

BERLIN: A brace from Germany striker Deniz Undav lifted VfB Stuttgart to a 3-2 come-from-behind home win over Augsburg in the Bundesliga on Sunday, while Eintracht Frankfurt beat Mainz.

The victory was Stuttgart's sixth in their past seven league games and takes the German Cup holders to fourth in the table.

Fabian Rieder put the visitors in front after eight minutes but Stuttgart's Maximilian Mittelstaedt levelled things up from the spot 10 minutes later.

Han-Noah Massengo restored Augsburg's lead midway through the opening half but Undav struck back for the hosts, heading in an Angelo Stiller cross before the break.

With 10 minutes remaining, Stiller once again found an onrushing Undav, who collected the ball on the edge of the box and scored at the near post.

In Sunday's late game, Japan winger Ritsu Doan scored a late goal to take Eintracht Frankfurt to a 1-0 home win over derby rivals Mainz.

Both sides were poor in the opening half but Frankfurt grew into the match after the break, pinning Mainz back in their own half.

With 80 minutes gone, Doan cut down the right, beat two Mainz defenders and thumped home a low shot.

The win took Frankfurt to seventh, while Mainz remain stranded in the bottom two.

Elsewhere, Freiburg beat St Pauli 2-1 in the day's other match.—AFP

## Razzaq to lead Pakistan in Over-40s World Cup

KARACHI: The Pakistan Veterans Cricket Association (PVCA) on Monday announced an 18-member national squad for the IMC Over-40s T20 World Cup 2025.

Former Pakistan all-rounder Abdul Razzaq will lead the side at the global event, PVCA chief selector Ajaz Faquih said.

The squad contains a number of prominent former Pakistan players like all-rounder Shahid Afridi and spinner Zulfiqar Babar and batter Fawad Alam.

Former Pakistan captain and batting legend Javed Miandad will serve as the team mentor. He will be joined by former Test player Jalaluddin as coach and Azam Khan as team manager.

Squad: Abdul Razzaq (captain), Fawad Alam (vice-captain), Shahid Afridi, Zulfiqar Babar, Humayun Farhat (wicket-keeper), Sohail Khan, Tabish Khan, Shaheryar Ghani, Nadeem Javaid, Irfan Mushtaq, Adnan Baig (wicket-keeper), Mohammad Ali, Atif Maqbool, Javed Mansoor, Hassan Nasir, Mohammad Suleman, Tariq Mahmood, Imran AliOfficials: Javed Miandad (mentor), Jalaluddin (coach), Azam Khan (manager).—APP

## Liverpool must focus on results, not title race after loss to City: Slot

MANCHESTER: Liverpool manager Arne Slot admitted that talk of a Premier League title challenge was premature given their current form as he candidly analysed his side's humbling 3-0 away defeat to rivals Manchester City on Sunday.

First-half goals by Erling Haaland and Nico Gonzalez and a stunning effort by Jeremy Doku after the break crowned a superb City display against lacklustre opponents.

The trouncing marked the reigning champions' fifth league loss of the season — one more than all of the last campaign — and sent Slot's men sliding down the table to eighth place after 11 games, eight points adrift of leaders Arsenal and four behind City.

"It feels there's too many [losses]," Slot told reporters. "And the last thing I should speak about now is the title race. We should first focus on getting results — result after result after result — before we can even think about that. The reality is that we are eighth.

"I said last season, many times, the best way to judge the league table is, of course, after 38 [games], but the next best thing to judge it is after 19 games [the season's halfway point], because then you all faced the same opponents.

"And the last thing we should focus on is on the title race. We need to improve. And that's obvious."

Liverpool had arrived at the Etihad on a high after recent victories over Aston Villa and Real Madrid that had halted an ugly streak of six losses in seven games across all competitions.

The Dutchman was frank in his assessment of the match, conceding that City were dominant, particularly in the first half.

"Everyone is disappointed," he said. "It was a very good start of the week, winning at Villa, winning against Real Madrid. But if you thought you already faced two strong opponents, then City comes across you away also at the Etihad which is for every team difficult, including us.

"And they were by far the much better side in the first half."On the other hand Pep Guardiola showed the world in the 1,000th game of his managerial career that the magic still remains.

They said last season the Catalan, who made his name as a player and then set about becoming one of the world's most decorated coaches in the city next to the Mediterranean, had lost his sparkle as City were dethroned.

But a win over his biggest rival since arriving in England in 2016 proved talk of his demise was premature.

MANCHESTER: Jeremy Doku (R) of Manchester City shoots to score against Liverpool during their Premier League match at the Etihad Stadium.—Reuters

"Just want to say thank you to the players, backroom staff to give me that present," the former Barcelona and Bayern Munich manager, said. "Proud to do it here in Manchester with my City. "Now rest and come back with the energy."

Guardiola has won 12 league titles and three Champions Leagues and a sackful of other silverware since starting out as a coach of Barcelona's second string in 2007.

After his milestone match on Sunday, he said those early days laid the groundwork for the dynasties he has built in Catalonia, Bavaria and now in Manchester.—Reuters